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COLLEGE AND REFERENCE SECTION

FIRST SESSION

(Tuesday, June 29, 2:30 p. m.)

The first session was called to order Tuesday, June 29, at 2:30, by the Chairman, Mr William W. Bishop, Superintendent of the Reading room, Library of Congress.

THE CHAIRMAN: The first paper, by MR N. D. C. HODGES, is entitled:

BRANCH LIBRARIES, THEIR DEVELOPMENT

Let me begin by quoting some remarks made by Mr Winsor at the first meeting of the American Library Association and that was in 1876. These run as follows:

1⁴"The Boston public library now consists of a central library, containing the great students' collection in the Bates Hall, and a popular department of over 30,000 volumes. Communicating with headquarters daily, by boxes passing to and from, are six branch libraries, containing from seven to seventeen thousand volumes each, and situated at from two to seven miles from the central library, forming a cordon of posts. Farther outlying we have begun a system of deliveries or agencies, where orders for books are received, which are sent to the nearest branch or to the central library. The books are sent in response, and delivered at the delivery. In the same way the branches are deliveries of the central library. The system works well, and popularizes the institution; and the branches and deliveries, instead of detracting from the importance of the central library, only serve to advertise it and to increase its circulation, so that now the issues of the central library are between two and three times what they were in 1870, when we had no branches; and the grand total of issues of the entire library is now from four to five times what it was in that year. There is, of course, more or less delay in the delivery service, owing to our boxes passing but once each way in a day. I deem it not unlikely that much time will before long be saved by using a telegraphic wire for the messages; nor do I deem it impracticable to annihilate time by the pneumatic tube."

When I had gone thus far, I was inclined

to stop. It seemed that Mr Winsor, 33 years ago, had given us the gist of the philosophy of branch libraries.

The history of branch libraries has been well told, first by Mr Cole² in 1893 in a paper read at the Chicago meeting, and next by Mr Bostwick³ in 1898. Mr Winsor, Mr Cole and Mr Bostwick treated branch libraries as agencies for circulating books, not as arms of the library in its complete organization for aiding the patrons in their reference work as well as in their home reading. Mr Ward⁴, in his paper before the Association at the Magnolia meeting in 1902, was the first to discuss branch reference work, its possibilities and difficulties, and some of the difficulties he saw in the limitations, as to number and capacity, of the branch staffs. The most competent member of a branch's staff cannot always be on duty; and, the gradation downwards in capacity being rapid if the staff numbers only three or four, it must happen that a reader visiting the branch in the morning or other off-hours may find as a leader in his studies a high school graduate of a year's standing. Then, again, the less the intellectual and technical training of the member of the staff to whom a reader must address himself, the more danger is there of the attendant's losing sight of his or her insignificance, of forgetting that the branch attendant's function is much that of a tentacle to hold a reader and bring him into intellectual contact with the institution as a whole.

Mr Hill,⁵ at the 1902 meeting, in giv-

¹See Library Journal, 1876-77, 1: 125-6.

²See "Branches and deliveries." Library Journal, 1893, 18: 220-23.

³See "Branch libraries." Library Journal, 1898, 23: 14-18; also, "How can central and branch work best be co-ordinated?" Ibid. C98-100.

⁴See "Branch libraries; functions and resources." Library Journal, 1902, 27: C42-46.

⁵See "Branch libraries: Administration." Library Journal, 1902, 27: C46-50.

ing his views of the administrative organization of a library having a number of branches and especially of the need of co-ordination among the several agencies of the library, quotes from the report of the librarian of one of the Brooklyn branches, and this, in turn, I place before you:

"That such a plan [of centralization] frequently involves the sacrifice of individual ideas and methods of work is inevitable; and the plea is sometimes urged that the ultimate result will be to destroy originality; so far as routine goes this is undoubtedly true, but there are many features of library work incident to the personal contact with the public—making of bulletins, preparation of reading lists, etc.—that offer an inviting field to every librarian in charge as varied and resourceful as the individual personalities themselves. When this feeling that we are each an integral part of a great library system, as closely linked in purpose and methods to the administration department and to each other as if all were gathered together under a single roof, has superseded purely selfish interest in our respective charges, then and not till then will the full measure of united action be realized. Without such a conception of the task before us the best individual effort, no matter how zealously pursued, will avail little. This phase of the question invites serious reflection on the part of every one of us, and a keen sense of our own personal responsibility to the trust imposed in us. I like to think of the branch not as a limited, independent collection of books, more or less arbitrarily selected and placed conveniently for the public, but rather as a local representative of a great system, never a mere substitute for it."

In our Cincinnati branches there are fairly complete working collections of reference books, larger, perhaps, than in most independent libraries of the same size. The librarians have had experience. In the study room of the main library, in miscellaneous reference work, they have all the problems of the small library; work with grade and high school pupils, with university students, and with those attending the University extension courses given in the branches, with club women, debaters, and members of missionary societies. In so far as this reference work is done with the resources of the branch, it is like that of any independent library and

needs no explanation, but the branch must also make use of the books at the main library and at other branches. Requests are sent down every evening, some of them for a definite book, but many more for books on some unusual subject. The latter are put on our Special topic blanks and go directly to the catalog and reference department, a department which is all one, as most of our catalogers do reference work during some part of each day. These Special topic blanks receive attention from the member of the staff who is best posted on the subject upon which books are called for, and the readers receive as much help in this indirect way as if they were to make a visit to the main library, with this exception, that they must of necessity miss that contact with the many books which would be put at their disposal were they actually studying their subject at the main library. But the results are so satisfactory, that comparatively few branch readers feel the need of going themselves to the main library for assistance.

References on club programs are looked up in advance, and lists of these references are filed at the branch nearest each club's habitat, with an indication of which books must be brought from the main library. Books are taken from the loan collection, from the main library or another branch, and placed on deposit for a week, or a season, provided the need seems greater at one particular branch than elsewhere. In a great emergency, a reference magazine may be sent to a branch. This is done grudgingly on account of the large amount of reference work at the main library. A typewritten extract from a volume in the study room is made and sent out to a branch when the material cannot be found in circulating form. Typewritten lists of references are sent upon request. But the time comes when, in justice to himself and to the librarian, the reader must be urged to go directly to the larger collection. When this is overlooked the result is poor service. When an indignant man insists that the branch should have a full set of patent specifications and drawings and newspaper files, the branch

librarian must make it as clear as possible that those at the main library will have to suffice for the whole library territory. It sometimes happens that the branch librarian errs in not sending to the main library a committee preparing a club program for the next year, or an individual making a study of the early history of Cincinnati. Between the unwillingness of the reader to go any further than is necessary and the laudable ambition of the branch librarian to supply all of the demands coming to her, the distinction between what cannot and what can be done at the branch is sometimes overlooked.

MISS CHARLOTTE E. WALLACE, Librarian of the East Liberty branch of the Carnegie library of Pittsburgh, then read a paper on

LIMITATIONS OF REFERENCE WORK IN BRANCH LIBRARIES

In reference work, a branch library holds a peculiar position. Its equipment, in some particulars, surpasses that of the small library, as its collections are reinforced by those of the central library; while it is restricted because of this same relationship, since it must always remain a subordinate department.

In my attempt to make this paper concrete, I shall tell you of the limitations of a reference department in a Branch with a collection of about 23,000 volumes, which issued 200,028 books in 1908. The Branch is located in a business district, near to one of the better residence sections of Pittsburgh, and also near to a slum district crowded with Italians and Negroes. While the Branch is not in a manufacturing center, it reaches the employees of such firms as the Westinghouse companies (which are situated in the near-by suburbs), as it is within two blocks of the railroad station used by many of these men.

The problem of the branch librarian is to give the branch borrowers as generous service as is possible, within the limits which the branch cannot legitimately exceed as a department related to a central library and other branches. While the col-

lections of a branch must be made as broad and varied as is suited to its purpose, the branch must depend upon the central library for a large number of books—expensive works which it would be extravagant to duplicate, and books for which there is only an occasional call. But the branch librarian comes directly into contact with the public, gets the viewpoint of those who use the branch, and sympathizes with even the occasional borrower who is disappointed at not finding certain books in the branch collections, and who is consequently annoyed by the delay caused in obtaining books from the central library. These divergent appeals make consistent book selection difficult.

There is no doubt that persons engaged in special study should use the central library. It would be unreasonable to expect to find obscure subjects, or those rarely sought, in a branch collection. But subjects which are included in the more general interests of the well-informed reading public should be provided in the branches.

The character of the reference work varies in each branch district in Pittsburgh, but can be roughly grouped as follows: miscellaneous information, material for debates, information on the local industries, references needed in connection with the study of the Bible and missions, and the special work done with the schools and clubs.

The provision for reference work in the branch libraries of Pittsburgh is the following: Each of the branches is furnished with a collection of the more essential reference books. The adult reference collections vary in number from between two and three hundred titles in the smaller branches to between three and four hundred titles in the larger branches. The number of current reference magazines varies from a list of about seventy to nearly a hundred titles, including a fair proportion of the technical magazines. These magazines are kept at the branches for two years, the file is accessible to the public, and constitutes our only file of reference magazines. Magazines bound for circulation, which may be on the shelves

when needed, are sometimes consulted for reference.

This brings me to the crucial point of my paper, as especially illustrating the limitations of branch reference work; but as other libraries may follow a different plan, perhaps I should say "The limitations of reference work in the Pittsburgh branches."

The branch libraries own collectively a set of the "Abridged Poole," which is kept at the central library; and each branch contains the "Abridged Poole" indexes, supplemented by the "Reader's guide to periodical literature." Magazines and books may be obtained from the central library regularly three times a week by messenger, and in urgent cases more frequently by special messenger. This plan always means that the reader applying at the branch for a subject which is treated satisfactorily only in the bound volumes of magazines, must either return to the branch a second time or go to the central library for his information.

This arrangement does not encourage branch readers in the reference use of books. It makes difficulties where the way should be easy, if we hope to have readers make a liberal use of the library. It does not bring the reference work up to the level of efficiency otherwise attained throughout the branch service, nor does it provide that accommodation for the general reader which the branch is specially planned to furnish. A library assistant taking pride in her work, feels embarrassed to have to admit that information is not immediately forthcoming on such subjects as the cobalt mines of Canada, Esperanto, George Junior Republic, the mines of Goldfield and Tonopah, the political career of William Travers Jerome, the Sage Foundation, or any other subject of this class given prominence in magazines antedating the branch reference file. A reader naturally expects to find reading matter of this kind in a branch library, and would undoubtedly find it in an independent library of smaller size than the branch he is using.

In making a selection of magazine sets to be kept at the branch, a helpful guide

might be the following list, which is based on the actual use of the "Abridged Poole" by the Pittsburgh branches. Out of 38 sets indexed, 15 have been selected and arranged in the order of their greatest use by the branches: "North American Review," "Atlantic Monthly," "Littell's Living Age," "Forum," "Outlook," "Harper's Magazine," "Century," "Nation," "Arena," "Eclectic," "Chautauquan," "Cosmopolitan," "Nineteenth Century" (of the "Nineteenth Century," "Fortnightly," and "Contemporary Review," the "Nineteenth Century" is slightly in advance of the use of the two others, which is equal), "Review of Reviews" (the record of calls for this is somewhat lowered, owing to the fact that it is bound for circulation in some of the branches, and since the back numbers usually remain on the shelf it is therefore immediately available). "Charities" and "The Independent" would be equally useful, although not included in the "Abridged Poole."

The second great limitation of branch reference work is found in the need of depending upon the loan collection for reference material. This, in so many instances, proves disappointing, as the books required are frequently in circulation. Nevertheless, at the East Liberty branch we have started a very close analysis of the books in the loan department. Out of about 3,800 titles analyzed in the "A. L. A. index to general literature" and its supplements, our branch library has only 324 titles. The indexing we have done adds 442 titles to this number, making a total of 766 titles indexed by subject.

This work, incomplete as it is, is of the greatest value. Even where our fine catalog, one of our chief aids in reference work, fails to indicate a subject, here we may find several entries. While indexing and cataloging are not synonymous terms, the branch librarians in Pittsburgh hope, in time, to have the books which are added to the adult loan departments of the branches as fully analyzed for subject as are those which appear in our catalog of "Books in the children's department."

Other aids in the reference work of the Branch are a small collection of pamphlets

and lists; and a slip index of reference questions, containing the sources from which the answers have been obtained, a record kept since the opening of the Branch and often saving a second search.

If space permitted, much might be said about the superior equipment for reference work which the branch indirectly possesses, in that it may command the generous service of a central library, having access to a strong reference department, a liberal loan collection, and a technology department of inestimable value.

All of which leads me to the conclusion, that the limitations of reference work are more than counterbalanced by the possibilities for this work, in a branch dependent upon a central library.

The practical experience in branch reference work in three large public libraries was presented in papers by MR HORACE G. WADLIN for the Boston public library, MR H. M. LYDENBERG for the New York public library, and MR HERBERT S. HIRSHBERG for the Cleveland public library, as follows:

BRANCH REFERENCE WORK IN THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

Before describing the reference work at the branches of the Boston public library it should be explained that the library system comprises 11 branches so-called, each with a considerable collection of books, domiciled either in independent buildings or in leased quarters of some magnitude, and 17 reading rooms so-called, occupying, usually, one large apartment under lease, each reading room having only a small permanent collection of books, augmented from time to time by deposits drawn from the central library. These reading rooms are in fact minor branches.

All these library stations are operated not independently but as parts of a unified system. Each has its own custodian, the official title of the assistant in charge, and its own staff of minor assistants, the entire force varying in number from nine at the larger branches to one only at the smaller reading rooms. The efficiency of the ref-

erence work at the branches depends, in the first place, upon the custodian who is, for branch work, the reference librarian, and who instructs and directs the work of her staff. The operation of the branches and reading rooms is supervised from the central library, the librarian being represented in direct supervision by a staff officer called Supervisor of branches. Between each branch and reading room and the central library there is daily communication by means of wagons for the reception and delivery of books. Each branch, and to a lesser extent each reading room, works in co-operation with a certain number of public schools, meeting directly the reference requirements of the teachers within its own assigned territorial district. Books from the central library may be freely drawn by borrowers who apply at a branch or reading room, the books being immediately sent out by the wagons, and books so borrowed may be returned either at the branch where received or at any other branch; or they may be returned at the central building by the borrower directly. Any reference book in the central library, which circulates, may in this way be drawn through a branch with equal facility as if contained in the branch collection, subject only to the few hours' delay in transportation. Therefore the principal circulating reference collection is kept at the central library, with duplicates in sufficient number to supply not only the central demand but also the occasional branch demand, from readers individually, for home use; and for temporary deposit to augment the branch collections.

But, apart from the central collection available for use at the branches in the way described, the permanent branch reference collections contain all the standard reference books of the encyclopaedia and dictionary type, including also atlases, yearbooks, and a considerable number of volumes useful for reference work, but not distinctly reference books, such, for example, as anthologies or standard collections of prose and poetry, various scientific and technical treatises, histories, compendiums of the fine and useful arts, biographies, etc. Each branch contains a care-

fully selected collection of volumes of this character, brought together on account of their adaptability to such reference work as the experience of years has shown will probably be called for at the branches. All these books duplicate books to be found in the central library, and they are also common to all the branches. Therefore, the branch collections are practically uniform throughout the city. The reading room collections, while smaller, duplicate the branch collections, differing from them only in the number of volumes composing them. That is, these smaller collections represent a more rigid process of selection.

Reference work at the branches and reading rooms is largely performed in co-operation with the public and parochial schools, and other educational institutions in the immediate vicinity; or to meet the needs of students from higher educational institutions who may live in the vicinity, and who for that reason may prefer to use the station instead of the central library. The demand from year to year may therefore be gauged and arranged for in advance; and teachers are invited to submit advance lists of such books as may be required from time to time, and these volumes may then be set aside on reserved shelves for the use of pupils or students, and supplemented by relays of books drawn from the central collection for the time being. A certain amount of club reference work and work for study classes is to be expected each year, and there are sometimes especial needs due to local conditions in particular districts which are met by deposits of special books from the central library.

It is obvious that the branch attendants acquire familiarity, through experience, with the kind of reference work which they are generally expected to meet. They are urged to become familiar not merely with their own collections, but with the resources of the central library. They are required to make periodical reports, and occasionally special reports, of their work to the supervisor at the central building, in which reports reference work is included. The subject of reference work,

especially that with schools, is often taken up at the regular meetings of the custodians held at the central library throughout the season, and they are encouraged to report any peculiar difficulties which they may have encountered, or to apply for any special volumes that may be needed from the central library to meet particular cases.

There is, of course, a continual amount of reference work of an elementary character performed at the branches, such as replying to questions which may be answered by reference to encyclopaedias or technical books; and, as I have indicated, the branches are equipped for meeting this. If, however, the branch collections are not sufficiently complete to enable an inquirer to cover his subject, he is referred to the central library collection, and in general it may be said, that for all extended use of reference books in literary or scientific research, for example, for authorship either of books or important theses; or for such reference work as is required by newspaper men in their daily work, the central library is used in preference to the branches, on account of the wealth of reference material which it contains and its accessibility; and because the accommodations at the central building permit reservations of books and assignment of special tables to be held from day to day, to an extent not possible at the branches. In Boston, it should be observed, owing to the compactness of the city, the central library may be visited by anyone who proposes to do extended reference work, almost as conveniently as any branch.

It is perhaps obvious that in a library so large as ours, relying principally on a card catalog which requires much space, it is impracticable to maintain at the different branches a complete catalog of the reference and quasi-reference books contained in the central building. But, in view of the accessibility of the central collection, this duplication of catalogs is hardly needed. And the Library for many years has issued bulletins and special reading lists of central material, all of which are available at the branches for use in calling books from the central library. The large tech-

nical collections, books on the fine and mechanic arts, volumes especially useful to mechanics, designers and art students are maintained at the central library, only the more elementary and general works of this character being duplicated in the branch collections.

All possible assistance is given to readers in discovering sources of information, including advice as to the best books on particular subjects. The aim, however, is to create the power of self-help, so that one who uses the library may himself discover what is required, and to that extent acquire the knowledge of how to use books. Classes from the public schools are systematically instructed at the central library and at some of the branches on such points as the use of the catalogs, and the general use of the reference books. This instruction is given through brief talks intended to aid the development of what may be termed the "library habit." The result of this instruction influences the reference work performed at the branches by the pupils who have received it.

REFERENCE WORK IN THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY BRANCHES

The present relations as to reference work between the circulation branches of the New York public library and its two reference branches can be summed up comprehensively by the statement that (1) we try to make all members of the staff understand that the resources of each department are at the command of the other so far as the rules allow, (2) each circulation branch has a set of the printed catalog of the (former) Astor library, a set of the two printed Bulletins of the New York public library, and the printed Handbook to the system, and (3) ample telephone connection puts at the service of each branch the union catalog of the circulation department, kept in the department headquarters, and the official (author) catalog of the reference department, kept in the Astor building. Both these catalogs will go to the new central building, when it is ready for use.

The staff of our reference department is distinct from that of our circulation department, our books are different, our methods are different—in details, at least. The two departments, however, are not two distinct libraries. To be sure, we can not transfer books from one department to the other, but we can put the resources of each at the service of the other. Our circulation branches vary in size from five to thirty thousand volumes. Each has a carefully chosen selection of standard dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and other general reference books. In the whole department "classed" books form 60 per cent of the stock and furnish 40 per cent of the home use. All these "classed" books—even much fiction, theoretically, for that matter—furnish material for a certain amount of reference use. We have no satisfactory figures as to the ratio between books read within the building for a specific purpose—if that may be accepted as another definition of "reference" use—and books read within the building for pastime. Indeed, in our circulation branches we have long since given up the attempt to record this inside use in terms of volumes consulted.

What are we doing to meet these demands for help? Those of our assistants that came from library schools have had the usual course of work with reference books, those that have gone through our own training class have had a similar instruction. This training should put them all in position to settle 90 per cent of the questions that lead to ordinary reference use. Questions that can not be answered by the desk or reading-room attendants with the reference books at hand are supposed to be passed on to the librarian-in-charge, and by her, if necessary, to headquarters.

Our two monthly publications, the "Bulletin of the New York public library," and the "Monthly list of additions" to the circulation department, record our resources on various topics and name the more important of our current accessions. Circulation department books are as a rule freely interchangeable from one branch to an-

other, reference department books are for use within the building. Both bulletins are on file at every branch. Each branch has, also, telephone connection with circulation headquarters where is kept the union catalog of the department, and with the official catalog at Astor, which records the contents of the two reference branches. This amplification of the first paragraph brings us round to the starting point. When we say that our branches are urged to pass on to Astor headquarters such reference questions as they can not answer there is little more to be said.

Some months ago we tried to learn just what it was that branch attendants wanted to know about our reference department work to help them in circulation work. At one of the regular weekly meetings of librarians-in-charge a good hour or more was spent in answering questions on this particular point. Each librarian-in-charge then held a conference with her own assistants and the results of these questions came up at the next weekly meeting. My recollection is that few if any questions had to do with methods or principles; practically all were semi-complaints that reference department books could not be sent to circulation branches, wistful wishes that the reference branches were nearer each particular circulation branch, and queries as to whether the reference branches had particular books or kinds of books. The general questions were all answered in our printed Handbook, the specific questions needed reference only to the printed catalogs or bulletins or to the union catalogs.

My own opinion is that the potential library-using public has a more or less accurate idea as to the differences between the reference and the circulation collections; this remark omits consideration of the much larger public that has not the library habit, that knows there is such an institution, but lacks time or inclination to visit it until an out-of-town caller needs attention, at which time the library takes its place with the aquarium, the Statue of Liberty, the seeing New York coach, the museum, parks, etc.

Reference readers in the circulation branches have simpler demands than at Astor or Lenox. After they have been helped to the extent of branch collections and have been sent to Astor or Lenox once or twice for supplementing these resources, they seem to make their own decisions as to the better field for the solution of future problems. Many readers prefer the circulation branches for reference work rather than Astor or Lenox because the smaller collections are nearer their homes; granting that superficial results only are wanted this preference is better for all concerned. Others choose to struggle with their problems in the local branches because they get more personal attention than in the larger buildings. From headquarters standpoint this preference is commendable, granting that equally good results are attained with the smaller collection; but it is unfortunate in its suggestion that the machinery we have provided to help the reader is more prominent than the help it furnishes. Circulation branches are preferred by other readers because they want a single, unqualified, comforting answer to their query, rather than to risk the possibility of being burdened with the material from which this answer was worked out by the encyclopaedia writer. They could get the categorical reply at the larger building, to be sure, if they but said they wanted it, but instinctively they feel the danger of obtaining too much information suggesting more thorough doubts rather than the single, satisfying assertion.

What we shall do when we move our present Astor and Lenox collections into the new central reference building is a matter that has had much consideration. We shall have there a circulating collection of 50,000 to 100,000 volumes, absolutely separate from the million volumes in the reference collection. This circulating collection will solve the insoluble by providing books that are at once interesting and attractive for the general reader and gladdening to the heart of the scholar. (I am fully aware that it is safer to make this assertion two years before the wonder

is put on view than two years afterwards.)

We hope to have here many of the books the branches now long for on the barricaded Astor and Lenox shelves. We hope to have them so cataloged and indexed that any inquirer in the thirty miles between Kingsbridge on the north and Tottenville on the south may quench his ardent thirst for information within an incredibly short time after he has voiced it at the nearest delivery desk. We hope,—but why dull anticipation by bald statement now? In this respect as in many others we hope to give better account of our trust when that final moving has taken place than circumstances, as we now explain it, allow us to do to-day. At present our young men must see visions and our old men dream dreams.

Possibly in that golden time we shall be able to exercise some central supervision over the branch reference work; to have a "general staff" or some prescient, omniscient person able at once to direct from his desk the efforts of fifty different branches to learn who wrote "Hoch der Kaiser," what is the heraldic description of the arms of Oklahoma, what the tariff is on rubber erasers consigned to Manchuria, what the annual needle output of Sheffield amounts to in feet or miles, the mean average rainfall at Pittsburgh between 1833 and 1843, when Scott's translation of Goethe's "Erlkönig" was first printed, and various other topics of equal importance. All very interesting speculation, no doubt, but remember who it was that spoke to Faust about the "Kerl der speculirt," and what the gentleman said.

The day may come, too, when we shall be able to give systematic instruction in each branch, based on the particular kinds of reference questions put by readers at that particular branch. It may be that we can shift from branch to branch such assistants as show an aptitude for this kind of work, and possibly give them a chance to help in the more difficult, more varied work in the new building. Unfortunately this instruction work can go but a certain distance. It can describe certain kinds of helps for certain kinds of questions; it can describe and define the character, advan-

tages, limitations of reference books generically and specifically; it can lay down general rules and suggestions; but it can not formally give rules for all possible contingencies. They say the first and foremost requirement for a successful newspaper reporter is "a nose for news," this before a training in newspaper methods, before a knowledge of the "office rules" in English. A somewhat similar instinct for the contents of books, a clear headed alertness, an ability to generalize from and profit by past mistakes and successes, a readiness to turn to collateral lines when the obvious sources prove empty, these and related mental qualities are not to be taught by the methods of the schoolmen, nor do they come to those who do not diligently seek after them.

THE MAIN REFERENCE DEPARTMENT AND THE BRANCHES IN THE CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

In discussing the relations of the main reference department and the branches in Cleveland, I shall first endeavor to point out the salient characteristics of the book collections in order to indicate along what lines the branches are most in need of help. Though I shall confine this discussion within the limits set by the subject, namely to the seven large branches, it will be understood that the statements apply in a general way to the smaller library agencies, the sub-branches, high school libraries and deposit stations.

The main reference collection now contains about 55,000 volumes and pamphlets. In addition to the usual sets of bound periodicals, society transactions, public documents, encyclopaedias and other standard reference sets, there have been placed in the collection many books which are not essentially reference books in the narrow sense of the word. Our aim has been to cover fairly well the entire field of knowledge, making the reference service independent of the circulating books which in a large system are likely to be inaccessible when most needed. This policy has been followed particularly in technology, travel, history and biography. Again, there are

the costly art histories, art biographies and beautifully illustrated books of travel. If put in general circulation these books would soon wear out, but they can be loaned under certain restrictions from the reference room and kept in good condition much longer. We are rich in plates on art, architecture, interior decoration, etc., which at some sacrifice to the plates themselves we have kept unbound in order to be able to loan them singly wherever they may be needed. As none of the branches have any considerable picture collection that in the main library serves the entire system.

The branch collections average from 15 to 20 thousand volumes, within which it has been the aim to build up in the branches small live reference collections consisting of books in frequent demand. The selection has been made by the branch librarians with the approval of the librarian and vice-librarian. The size and scope of these collections vary considerably according to the individuality of the branch librarian and the character of the branch neighborhood. Standard books of reference are, to be sure, much the same in all large libraries, yet the range of choice for a small collection from the thousands of reference books is wide. In foreign neighborhoods the reference as well as the circulating books are adapted to the nationality of the principal elements of the population.

Bound periodicals are a prominent feature, two branches having almost complete "Abridged Poole" sets. The generous size of our branch buildings has not as yet made the storage of bound magazines a problem. The library subscribes for the periodicals, and once we have them, the cost of binding seems to us more than paid for by the convenience of having them immediately available.

The fact that in Cleveland we have no large central building where we can accommodate any large number of readers has led in great degree to the spreading out of the reference work. In the busy season our combination reading and reference room is usually full to overflowing. This condition of affairs has made us reluctant to urge the centralization of the reference work. Then too, and this perhaps

is the stronger reason, we have tried to bring the books directly to the point of contact with the people and this point of contact is at the branches. Though our branches are well equipped to meet their neighborhood needs, calls on the central collections are frequent. Upon the flexibility of these collections depends the efficiency of our work.

Now as to methods of making the main collections available to our branch constituencies. No book catalog of the library has been published since 1889. The "Open Shelf", our quarterly bulletin, has never been cumulated so there is no convenient index in the branches of the books in the main library. Weekly staff meetings, at which all new books both reference and circulating are discussed, aid in informing the branch librarians of the resources of the library. Branches are under the immediate supervision of the librarian and vice-librarian, so there is no central office from which details of branch work in the main library are carried out. Most of the requests for books in the main library are sent through the stations department which has charge of deliveries throughout the system. Deliveries are made to branches every day, to sub-branches and high school libraries three times a week, to school stations twice a week, to factories once a week, and to delivery stations according to demand. Special messengers are sent when need arises.

The station's assistant fills the branch orders as completely as possible from the main circulating collection, then turns over to the reference department any orders which she thinks can be filled there. If a particular book is wanted, which can be spared for a limited time, it is sent to the branch and used either in the building or loaned to the reader as the case may be.

Reference books are carefully wrapped and protected from damage in transportation. On the package we paste this label:

From Reference Department

To Hough Branch

For: James Smith

Return: 22 Je. '09

For use at (Branch)

(Home)

If it seems inadvisable to allow a book to leave the department either because it is needed there or because of its value, the order slip is returned to the branch with explanations and the branch librarian is then expected to recommend a visit to the main library. Frequently too, a reader comes to the main library and asks to have a reference book sent to his neighborhood library for a short time. This we do when the reasons seem sufficient. In some instances, branch librarians who know that the reference department only can supply certain material, apply direct, saving the time necessary for the message to come through stations.

Bound periodicals are rarely lent to branches from the main reference collection, for as has been pointed out, most of the branches as well as the main circulating department have files of the more important Poole sets. Volumes lacking in one place may be supplied from another. A list of the bound magazines in the system promotes this interchange. Debaters, club women and others who have to consult a large number of magazines, government publications, etc., usually come to the main library. Students and club women find this no hardship, as they usually have ample leisure. It is to the busy mechanic or business man that we make a particular effort to bring the material.

Thus far I have covered only those cases which demand the bringing together of the book and the reader to supply the required information. A large number of questions can be readily answered by telephone; many others, e g., a recipe or a brief biographical sketch, can be answered by a short paragraph from a reference book. In such cases the extract is type-written and sent to the branch.

Since we have no printed catalog, a very obvious service of the main reference department is the preparation of reference lists on various topics showing the resources of the main collection. Requests for reading lists received at the branches are sent to the reference department which sends one copy of the list direct to the reader, with a statement that any circulating book

on the list may be borrowed through the branch. A second copy of the list is sent to the branch.

The preparation of references for women's clubs may be considered here. During the season just over (1908-1909) more than 50 clubs sent their programs to the reference department. References were looked up and individual club members notified that the material was ready for them. The branches did similar work for the clubs in each neighborhood, thus duplicating the work of the reference room. This year we plan to do away with this double labor. The main circulating and reference departments will compile lists of the material in each collection. These lists will be combined and sent in every case to the branch or branches in whose vicinity the members of a club live. Since practically all books in the branches are also in the main library, branch librarians will merely need to check on each list the books in their own collections. They will have in addition titles of books in the main collections and will know at once whether they can procure more material on any given subject. All post card notices will be sent from the main reference department and will read:

"References on your subject (name of subject) in the club (name of club) are now ready for you in the circulating and reference departments of the main library and in the branch nearest your home. Pictures illustrating topics may be had in many cases."

The problem of placing the resources of a large central reference library within reach of widely scattered branch constituencies is often difficult to solve. Our general policy is to bring the book and the reader together wherever it seems most practicable. We lend reference books just as freely as is consistent with unimpaired service at the main library. Every case must be decided on its merits. We are still experimenting.

With these papers the first general topic on the program was completed. Discussion of the next topic was opened by Mr Samuel H. Ranck, in a paper entitled

MUNICIPAL LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARIES.*

THE CHAIRMAN then appointed as a Nominating committee, Willard Austen, Walter B. Briggs and Marilla W. Freeman.

SECOND SESSION

(Friday, July 2, 1909, 9:30 p. m.)

The general subject of the session was "Problems arising from the size of great collections." The first paper was read by MR J. C. SCHWAB, Librarian of Yale university, on

THE USE OF THE TELAUTOGRAPH AT YALE UNIVERSITY

The telautograph is an electric device instantaneously repeating words written at one point so as to appear at any other point connected with the first by an electric wire. It was first exploited by metropolitan banks that wished to connect the public offices with the bookkeepers, often housed in the upper stories of the building, so as to insure instantaneous and errorless communication between these two departments. The writer of the message uses an electric pencil, writing the message on a pad before him, the words appearing instantaneously upon a corresponding pad upon any one of the receivers with which he makes connection.

In a large library the transmitter is installed within arm's reach of the delivery clerk who writes out the shelf number, and, if necessary, the abbreviated title of the book desired, at the same time turning the switch so as to send the message to the particular section of the stack, and at the same time ringing a bell to call to the receiver the page in charge of that particular section. The latter reads the shelf number on the receiver, procures the book, and sends it to the delivery desk by means of an electric conveyor, though the latter is not an essential part of the scheme.

The advantages of this device are the elimination of the confusion about the delivery desk in sending and receiving messages to and from the stack. Moreover, the number of pages needed is reduced, as well as the noise and confusion in their passing up and down and through the various stacks.

The stacks of large libraries almost necessarily grow in a vertical direction and the conveyance of books from and to the delivery desk involves much running up and down of stairs, an operation as wasteful of shoe leather and time as it is noisy and embarrassing.

The possibility of error in picking out the desired book in the stack is reduced, as the shelf number is uniformly indicated by a few delivery clerks trained in writing the symbols distinctly. The chief advantage of the device, however, is its elimination of noise and confusion resulting from the adoption of any other device, such as a telephone service from the delivery desk to the various sections of the stack.

The cost of such a telautograph service is approximately \$20 a year for a transmitter, \$30 a year for each receiver, and 10 cents a roll for the paper used. In the case of a particular library it is only necessary to figure out the desired number of receivers, the total cost of the system based on that number, and the resulting saving in the number and wages of pages.

The device could be further applied to connect the various departments of a large library where accuracy of messages and prompt replies are desired. The economy of cost, however, would not be so apparent nor so great.

MR LANE: Are not as many boys needed when the telautograph is used, and is there not some difficulty in supervising the boys when they are so scattered?

MR SCHWAB: That is a difficulty, although the boys in the stacks can be supervised from neighboring rooms. In the Yale library there are four boys on regularly. During certain hours of the day the telautograph is not used.

MR LANE: When the book asked for

*Mr Ranck's paper is printed in full in the "Library Journal," Aug. 1909, 34:345-50, and it is, therefore, omitted in this place.

is not on the shelves, is an answer returned?

MR SCHWAB: The boy answers with a buzzer, the number of rings being a code.

MR FLEISCHNER: We have tried it, but an indicator would be required in order to send the variety of answers that are necessary, and a better class of boys also.

MR SCHWAB: We are hoping for an improvement in the device, by which the paper on which the message is received can be torn off. As it is now the boy has to copy the slip.

MR ANDREWS: Two devices might be used in this connection. Instead of a buzzer, a colored light might be used to signal the answer back. The other is a time stamp, which is most useful in controlling the boys in the stack.

THE CHAIRMAN: A time stamp has been installed in the Library of Congress, and serves two purposes: It is a check on the boy, and is also useful in answering complaints of the public. If the telautograph is improved, it might be advantageously used to connect departments and other buildings. It would be better than the telephone in many cases, especially for foreign languages.

A paper followed, by MR C. W. ANDREWS of the John Crerar library, on
**PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE
SIZE OF CARD CATALOGS**

I find myself in the position of the Irishman accused of stealing a kettle. You may remember that he answered first that he did not steal it, but only borrowed it; second, that he had returned it; third, that he never had it; fourth, that it was a dipper and not a kettle; fifth, that it was cracked when he got it; sixth, that the complainant never had a kettle. So when I promised Mr Bishop to speak at this meeting of the problems arising from the increasing size of our card catalogs, I warned him that I was not sure of the importance and perhaps not of the existence of the problems. I had not then seen the very noticeable absorption of space in the reading room of the Library of Con-

gress by its card catalog, or I should better have understood his anxiety.

The first question, therefore, is whether such absorption is necessary. I do not recollect any discussion or determination of the proper relation of space for catalogs to that required for the other activities of a reference library, and perhaps it is time for us to consider the matter.

There are two proportions to be considered. One, that of the cards to the books, and the other that of the space for consultation to that for reading.

For the first proportion that prevailing in the John Crerar library may be taken as almost, if not quite, an extreme. This catalog is fuller than that of any other large library, partly because of its unusual combination of alphabetic and classed subject arrangements, partly because it contains almost no duplicates, and partly because the minute subdivision of its classed subject catalog requires a large proportion of added entries. It may fairly be assumed, therefore, that its use of five cards to a title for its public card catalogs, if not an absolute maximum, at least is a proportion so far above the average as to represent the problem fairly. On the other hand, it is possible that its proportion of one title to every two volumes may not be quite up to the average, because of the large number of long sets of periodicals; but against this must be set the unusual absence of duplicates. Taking this proportion, provision must be made for two and one-half cards per volume,—this is considerably larger than that indicated by Mr Hanson for the Library of Congress. Put these in trays at 800 to the tray, arrange in the typical Library Bureau cases, and one linear foot of wall space will accommodate 2 tiers, 24 trays, 27,200 cards; and a typical library of 1,000,000 volumes will require 92½ linear feet of catalog cases or 46 feet of a double row. Allow 36 inches for the two cases and 36 inches for the aisle between them, and there would be required 276 square feet of floor space. Storage for books in a close stack arrangement is at the John Crerar library 25 volumes to the square foot, and according

to the figures generally assumed for a public library, not over 40. Taking the former figure, 1,000,000 volumes would require 40,000 square feet. Assume that the catalog room is the height of two tiers of stack and the floor space required to store the cards is to that required to store the books as 552 to 40,000, or 1.34%.

Mr Green, the Superintendent of the Library of Congress, says that a building which will shelve 100,000,000 volumes and yet leave plenty of room for readers and administration, can be built on a city block. I feel certain that he has not calculated so closely but that he can spare 1.34% of his stack space for the catalog. So far as storage is concerned the kettle is certainly not much more than a dipper.

The use of the catalog is, however, a somewhat different matter. 30 square feet per reader is an ample but not luxurious provision for the reading room. It is much more than is necessary for those consulting the catalog. The John Crerar library provides a set stool and 3 square feet of table for each person, or with the aisles a total of 10 square feet. No figures have been found for the proportion of time spent in consulting the catalog to that spent in reading. It is the impression of the reference librarian, who has given the subject some consideration, that the average time spent at the catalog by all readers, including those who do not use it at all, will be somewhat more than five minutes. Our time record shows that the average time spent in reading is one hour. That makes the catalog time one-tenth the reading time, and, as the space required for each person is one-third, it follows that an allowance of one-thirtieth of the reading-room floor should be sufficient for the use of the catalog. This does not seem an extravagant proportion, nor one which calls for drastic remedies.

Having thus, as I hope, succeeded in convincing the jury that the prisoner at the bar is guilty at the worst of petty larceny, and that the sentence should be to the reform school rather than to the block, let me drop the role of counsel for the defense and call attention to a very serious drawback of large card catalogs and pro-

pose a remedy which will, at the same time, meet the physical difficulties so far considered.

Over and over again the reference librarian of the John Crerar library has asked for changes in our classification, mostly in the way of minuter subdivisions, in order to prevent the average reader from having to consult 100 titles, 10 of which he is interested in, at the most, and of which he may use, perhaps, one or two. From my own experience I can appreciate the desirability of such loss of time. In a card catalog, such as that of the John Crerar library, subdivision is usually an available and a fairly efficient remedy, especially as the chronological sub-arrangement avoids one of the greatest difficulties, the confusion of editions. Yet it has seemed to me that perhaps the proper remedy might be a more radical one, and if the catalog were an alphabetic catalog, I should be almost certain. The remedy I have in mind is the establishment of two public subject catalogs, one selected, and one comprehensive and complete.

The basic idea is the same as leads large libraries to the establishment of reading room collections of books. Speaking generally nine-tenths of the readers, even in a reference library, consult the subject catalog for the best, the most recent, or the most convenient work on a subject. They are not concerned with all the rest of the literature on that subject. So far as is possible their needs are met in the selection of books for the open shelf, but no large reference library with which I am acquainted has space enough on its open shelves for all the books that would have to be put there to meet these needs.

Such a selected reading-room catalog as is suggested would contain titles for all the reading-room books, for those which should be shelved there and for many others besides. Its scope would vary greatly in individual libraries, and its value would increase with the growth of a library, and perhaps much faster. I have made no experiments to determine how large such a selected subject catalog would be formed from our present one, but I should guess it to be about one-fifth; and this propor-

tion would steadily decrease as the library grew. It is not supposed that the cost would be a large factor. It is assumed that the use of printed cards would make the cost of the cards themselves insignificant. The largest item would be the time spent in selection. The cases and the time spent in arrangement would also be extra, but the space occupied would probably be more than counterbalanced by a more economical storage of the main catalogs. These could then be arranged in tiers of the same height as the stack. Indeed, such an arrangement, with an attendant to hand to readers the particular tray desired, as current periodicals are not infrequently treated, might be very useful even if only one catalog were provided. It would economize the time of the readers as well as the space, for such an attendant would translate into the usages of his particular catalog the manifold variants, synonyms, etc., under which readers think of subjects.

If the tendency, noted by the Chairman and discussed at the Atlantic City meeting, should become general, of sending school children into the world (and into the libraries) without a knowledge of the conventional order of the letters of the alphabet, some such assistance would become necessary on that ground alone.

Other suggestions have been made at various times, which would meet one or another of the chief objections to large card catalogs. Mr Fletcher would rely on bibliographies and suppress our subject catalogs; Mr Rudolf would replace these with condensed entries and a very economical mode of exhibition; Mr Lane and others, including myself, at one time or another have planned the issue of printed bulletins and the withdrawal from the card catalogs of all titles printed in them; Mr Hanson has indicated a solution the reverse of mine in the formation of a supplementary catalog for the books least used.

Looking back on the development of the last twenty years, it seems to me that the printed card and the handy tray have solved the physical difficulties of cost and space, and that the great difficulties remaining are the mental ones caused by the large number of subjects, and the large

number of entries under each subject. These difficulties, negligible for a library of 100,000 volumes are important for one of 1,000,000 and will be vital for one of 10,000,000. I have indicated remedies which may be worth trying or at least worth discussing.

DR RICHARDSON: Everyone must have noticed that readers are annoyed not only by having to look over so many items in a catalog, but by the difference in importance of those items, including analytic and periodical references, etc. One plan would be to keep in a separate catalog analytic references and entries for older books, for instance before 1800. Another way would be to have printed bibliographies to include all the analytics, and omit these from the card catalog. Another way to reduce the number of items in the case of different editions is by a mere reference in the subject catalog to the author catalog for a list of the different editions.

MR LANE: I have inquired of graduate students and professors about the use of the subject catalog, and it is disappointing to hear their unfavorable criticism. Harvard has a good subject catalog, but evidently not as good as it should be. I am favorably impressed by Mr Andrews's suggestion to help the public use the card catalog—that it should be kept behind bars and the right tray be handed out to applicants, thus insuring that everyone should receive help in its use.

MR LEE: I have had such experience in using a public library. Suppose that co-operatively or otherwise the government or other central body should issue a catalog in loose leaf form.

MR ANDREWS: Mr Lane and I have long advocated a loose leaf form for a subject catalog, but cards are best for an author catalog. That would be an interesting work for the American Library Association.

MR FLEISCHNER: How would you eliminate? You could not merely omit the earlier and keep the later books. Take Alaska, for instance; the latest book on it is no good.

MR LANE: Would not a dozen titles on Alaska satisfy the average person?

MR FLEISCHNER: Not in my experience. We have reduced our catalog by taking out one whole subject, music, and putting it in our music room. I do not see how any other sort of reduction could well be made.

MR GAY: In a medium-sized library do not the public think the catalog an awful thing? We need a catalog skimmer, and it would be a good position for a special assistant.

The next topic, "Principles governing the selection of a reference collection," was presented from two points of view, the first by MR WILLARD AUSTEN, of Cornell university library.

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE SELECTION OF A REFERENCE COLLECTION IN A UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

The law of supply and demand is operative in the world of books in much the same way as in the world of commerce, and whereas in earlier days the supply followed, a little tardily perhaps, after the demand, in these days the commercial plan of stimulating the demand by various methods is not unknown in bibliographical fields.

One of the most effective commercial methods of stimulating demand is the attractive display of goods, and librarians have found the same principle operative when applied to books. This fact has probably been a strong factor in the development of open-shelf libraries, although there are other reasons that quite justify the pulling down of the barriers. Perhaps the most apparent reason for open shelves with many persons is the ease with which books can be got when direct access is allowed, and the consequent saving of time and labor. No doubt this is also the most active principle in creating a reference library that is made up of books so frequently wanted for consultation that the usual process of getting them by means of the catalog would be well nigh intolerable in American libraries.

The first principle of selection for a reference collection in any library is un-

doubtedly based upon the question as to what books are so frequently wanted that they should be placed on open shelves for ready reference. Clearly this is an indeterminate lot that may range all the way from the usual dictionaries and cyclopedias to a large library. In the make up of such a collection beyond the cyclopedic materials, the needs of the users, varying with different localities, must be a determining factor. The demands of a university community, for example, being different from those of a manufacturing community, or a metropolitan district.

In a college and university community it is possible to distinguish, on broad lines, between two different kinds of work going on simultaneously, viz., reference work and research work, ordinarily thought to be quite the same. Much they undoubtedly have in common, but viewed from the point of materials wanted, they differ in many ways. A person doing research work must, of course, be constantly making use of the usual reference works, but the reference worker may never have need of much of the material indispensable to the research worker.

For research work of a serious nature one must have access to all sources, old and modern. He may need the rarest books in the library that can be used only under supervision or he may need the last World's almanac. He may need a book that has not been wanted for the last ten years and may not be used again within the next ten years, or he may have occasion to consult a work long since discredited or positively erroneous. Not infrequently some obscure dissertation is the only thing that will serve his need. Clearly, then, all his materials are not in the class of open-shelf reference books. Nothing short of the resources of the whole library will suffice in many cases.

The readers who make most use of a reference collection are those who want the latest facts about any particular subject summarized in the most convenient form. For this particular purpose they need generally the latest authoritative work. Oftentimes such works are at the

same time original sources,—the latest annual report on some subject or the latest statistical compilation—and as such are also of prime importance to the research worker. They are the tangents of these two classes of workers.

There is a third group of users whose needs are just as real, though not thought as important, that must be taken into consideration in every college community, because the materials it requires overlap or dovetail into, as it were, the materials needed by the other groups. It consists of the general readers for cultural purposes. They are not looking for facts primarily, but they require many books that are filled with facts. Their stimulus may come in the form of collateral reading for college work or from a personal interest in some subject.

With these three classes of readers, and they practically include all the constituency of a college or university community, we may proceed to make up the open-shelf library for all users, which may be called a reference library for convenience, but it has a wider field of usefulness than the name connotes. The old theory that a reference library should comprise only standard dictionaries, cyclopedias, almanacs and a few other books similar in character, is no longer adequate to the needs. Nor does it suffice to add to this material sets of periodicals, which many libraries do, because reference work leads one into this material extensively. There is still another class of books that is constantly needed for reference work, that may at times be needed for research work, and is the main supply of the general reader. This is the great group of monographic literature, that which remains after cyclopedic and periodical literature have been counted out. Not all of such literature has a place among reference books, but the standard works of this class are indispensable there, and no reference work of a high grade can be done without them.

The three great groups, then, that must enter into the composition of a reference library are: the cyclopedias, the periodicals, and the monographic literature. The

worth of such a collection, as is the case with the make-up of a general cyclopedia, lies largely in the proportion of materials included. As an otherwise good cyclopedia may be seriously discredited by the lack of a proper balance of its materials, so the value of a reference collection may be seriously impaired by the inclusion of too much of one class to the exclusion of materials of another. Many periodicals will increase the number of references one is able to get at easily, but this facility may be purchased at the cost of other and more important needs. This nice adjustment, when the space available or the funds, are limited, is the test of efficiency. And this adjusting process is not a matter that can be done once for all but is a continuous process, ever changing with the growth of literature.

As a broad general working plan, a reference library may be laid down on these lines:

1. General bibliographies, cyclopedias (including biographical, statistical and geographical cyclopedias), dictionaries, yearbooks, and other cyclopedic materials, too general for subject classification.

2. Periodical literature of such a general character as experience has shown to include many references, current in literature.

3. Standard monographic works covering all branches of knowledge, classed by subjects.

The first two groups are pretty clearly defined at any one time in their range and extent. In the third group lies the possibility of indefinite extension. Into this group may be pressed the whole of a library, barring rare, out of date and unfit books. But this would result in open shelves for practically the whole library, which, of course, is not expedient nor desirable for a university library, or perhaps for any library larger than 100,000 volumes exclusive of duplicates. The make-up of such a reference collection is rather that of a selected library. In addition to the *general* cyclopedic reference works, the several special subject groups include the bibliographies, dictionaries, cyclopedias, annual reports, yearbooks, etc., of

these special subjects. And in addition to these, many of which change frequently, are the constantly appearing monographs, historic and descriptive, of interest to the general reader, essential to the best reference work, and less necessary to the research worker. A considerable number of the best works on every subject, in fact it is not too much to say that all the latest authoritative work on a subject, may well be kept on the open reference shelves, one work supplying the need when another is out or temporarily in use. When kept in the stack, reference work constantly calls these books into the reading room. Why not keep them there?

The objection may be made that such a disposition of new and standard material interferes with the need of these books for home use. This would be true if the practice of keeping in the library at all times all books placed on the shelves of an open reference and reading room were adhered to. Such a practice involves much duplication, which does not wholly relieve the situation, when more than one copy is needed for out-of-the-library use, and none are really needed in the library. One copy of many works, in fact the great majority of books, is sufficient to serve all the need that ever will be felt, providing no hard and fast rule be made to prevent shifting from one place to another as the need demands.

The feeling that the integrity of a reference collection should be maintained at all cost; that a reader accustomed to find a certain book on a certain shelf should not be disappointed, is an attractive theory, perhaps, but without good foundation in actual practice. Any reference library that is kept up to date must be frequently changed; old editions must give way to new, old works be replaced by new and better ones, the fresher the material the better. Again, the book wanted may be in use by another within the library for so long a time as to effectually prevent its use by one who thinks his need brooks no delay. These and other legitimate causes for the absence of books from their accustomed places violate the reader's expectation quite as much as when

absent for home use. To be sure standard dictionaries, cyclopedias and other purely reference materials should always remain in the library because of their frequent use, until replaced by later works, but the monographic literature wanted for reading as well as for reference can be shifted from the place where it is less needed to the place where the need is more apparent without other results than the maximum efficiency and the minimum inconvenience.

For purposes of reference, often any one of a dozen books on a given subject will answer the need equally well, and the whole dozen are never absent at any one time. Books of such a character as experience has shown to be too frequently wanted to be allowed out of the library for more than temporary use can be plainly marked to distinguish them from those that may go out for a longer time.

This method allows all standard materials on a subject to be logically classified, and avoids separating books in the same class on the purely artificial lines of circulating and non-circulating as is commonly done to create a reference library, as distinguished from a circulating collection. The educational value of keeping together all open-shelf books of the same class more than outweighs the possible difficulty some readers might find in distinguishing between books that may circulate and those that may not, when standing side by side.

After all, the library that must provide for the diversified needs of a reading community cannot determine in advance, when placing books on the open reference shelves, whether a particular book will be so constantly needed as to call for restriction. Only experience with individual books can determine, in many cases, the freedom of use allowed in other places than the one to which it is assigned. All the theory that this book is for reference and that one for reading may be of no use when experience enters into the case.

To summarize: Place all books wanted for reference in one logical, orderly group on shelves open to all classes of users. From these books allow the withdrawal of those needed for home reading, seminary and laboratory research, in all cases where

experience has not shown that the greatest service to the greatest number requires the books to be kept in the library. In this way is attained the maximum efficiency at the least cost.

This was followed by a paper by MR W. DAWSON JOHNSTON, Assistant librarian of the Brooklyn public library, on

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE SELECTION OF A REFERENCE COLLECTION FOR A GREAT PUBLIC LIBRARY

It is a commonplace of library science that the character of the reference collection of a library should depend upon the character of the library, its collections, organizations, and use. It requires reiteration, however, because of the danger, in the division of library service by departments, of developing one department at the expense of another, and also because of the danger with A. L. A. guides and the like useful tools, of moulding one collection after the pattern of another.

The collections of a national library must differ from those of a state or municipal or university library, and those of a general library must differ from those of a special one. The existence of special departments or reading rooms like those devoted to art or statistics, and even the condition of the records of the library and of its several departments, must affect the selection of the reference collections. The character of the clientele of a library is, of course, a fundamental consideration throughout, and one that must lead to some amiable differences as to what the reference collection should comprehend.

In so far, however, as our conditions and our functions are similar we may well be influenced in the selection of our reference collections by certain general considerations. In the first place, we must be influenced by the scope and size of the collections in the library and their accessibility to the public. One is tempted to say that the size of the reference collection should ordinarily be in a given ratio to the size of the collections of the

library as a whole. But library conditions are so far from normal that I have been baffled in every effort to determine this ratio. Again, with regard to accessibility of the general collections to the public, we can only observe that open shelves will not make a reference collection unnecessary; they will, however, modify the character of the reference collection, and may make it unnecessary to place any but ready reference works in the reading room.

To pass on to a further consideration, if our reference collections have been divided, if there are departments or reading rooms especially devoted to periodicals, prints, maps, music, documents, local literature, book treasures, standard books, etc., we should devote relatively much more attention to these classes of literature than we should otherwise, partly because the special collections could be better displayed in separate quarters, partly because they could be handled more advantageously by the specialist in charge of them, and partly, too, because a different class of readers would have access to them. The scope of these special reference collections is, however, a subject for separate consideration. It is sufficient in this place to observe that their existence must modify somewhat the character of the collection as a whole, as well as the character of the collection which is left in the main reading room.

Another administrative consideration in the selection of the main reference collection is the necessity of temporary reservation of special collections. One problem in connection with them is that of their relation to the special exhibits of the issue department. Where reservation is required by a definite body of readers there need be no doubt as to its desirability, but in cases where the subject is one of general though temporary interest it may seem better to exhibit the books in the issue department rather than reserve them in the reference department. We may, for example, reserve a collection of books for use in the study of Shakespeare or a collection of books suitable for Christmas presents, while a collection of books on

the Boer War would be better exhibited with a view to facilitating their circulation.

Still another matter to be considered from the administrative point of view is the condition of the catalog. An inadequate subject catalog will make a good collection of bibliographies desirable. Classified bibliographies form useful supplements to a dictionary catalog, and bibliographies in dictionary form, or supplemented by an index, constitute valuable supplements to a classed catalog.

These various administrative considerations as to the relation of the reference collections to the size of the library, open shelves, special reading rooms, temporary reservations, and the condition of the catalog are of fundamental importance in determining their general scope. In defining, however, the scope of the collection of "ready reference" books, the essential part of the reference collections, one must be guided mainly by the character of the books themselves, the space available for their accommodation, and the cost of installing the collection and keeping it up to date.

The number of necessary reference books is not large, and Emil Reich promises that it will never be large, that, indeed, it will become less. I am inclined to the contrary opinion, but, however that may be, it is interesting to note that the British Museum has in its reading-room some 60,000 volumes; the New York public library plans for about 25,000 to 30,000 volumes; the Boston public library has about 8,500 volumes. All of these collections, however, include, in addition to works of ready reference, standard works and manuals. Miss Kroeger's "Guide to reference books" comprehends about 6,000 volumes and its annual supplements about 50 volumes each, not including annuals or new editions. This increase of nearly 1% a year does not appear formidable, and may conceivably grow less with an improved organization of the book industry. I do not anticipate, however, that the number of reference books proper will ever present any serious problem. The cost of compilation and publication and the limited demand for such works must

always prevent their rapid multiplication.

The question of shelving will not, therefore, under normal conditions present any great difficulties. The new buildings of large public libraries like Paterson, Grand Rapids, Providence, and Atlanta, described by Mr Hill in the statistical tables published in the Report of the Manchester (Eng.) libraries committee in 1908, have reference rooms with space for about 1,300 feet of shelving on an average, that is room for perhaps 10,000 volumes. This should be ample space for all the necessary ready reference collections of a library. The crowding of the space would indicate that some material was there which should be removed to the stacks, or that special reading rooms were needed for the accommodation of certain sections of the collection.

On the other hand, the question of the cost of this class of books is a most serious one. Not only is the original cost of a work of this class considerable, but the life of a reference book is short, and new editions and periodical and annual supplements are many. The British Museum has found it desirable to issue a new edition of its list of books in the reading room once in 15 years, the John Crerar library once in 9 years, the University of Leipsic once in 5 years.

The rapid change in this class of literature may be shown also by a comparison of the lists of reference books published by Dr Spofford in 1876, Mr Wheatley in 1886, and Miss Kroeger in 1908. Under the heading "Chemistry," for example, only 2 of the 7 titles mentioned by Dr Spofford are to be found in the list prepared by Mr Wheatley 10 years later, and only one of them, and that in a new edition, in Miss Kroeger's list. Indeed, about 97% of the books in the last list have been published since 1876, the date of Mr Spofford's list.

Another important consideration in estimating the cost of the reference collection is the large proportion of editions and annuals. Of those in Miss Kroeger's list about 33% are new editions, and 15% annuals.

The cost of the 100 reference books

selected for small libraries by Miss Kroeger is \$1474.65, that is about \$5 a volume. The cost of the entire collection would therefore not exceed \$30,000 and the cost of annual additions, perhaps not more than \$5,000. The largest libraries of the country, counting all except the Library of Congress, having over 300,000 volumes, expend for books and periodicals an average sum of \$46,077. These libraries, by an annual expenditure of 10% of their book fund for works of reference, can secure practically everything that should be added to their reference collections. But the average annual expenditure for all libraries having over 5,000 volumes is only \$1,922. Obviously, these libraries must devote much more than 10% of their book fund to reference books, and even then restrict their purchases to the more useful general works, and particularly to those in compendious form.

How are libraries, even the larger ones, to meet this problem of cost? How are they to select the necessary dictionaries, encyclopedic and other, relating to every subject and called by every name? It is difficult to say, but a somewhat categorical indication of the relative importance of the various classes of reference books may be attempted: Reference books for the general reader should be secured first and afterwards those for specialists, or, perhaps I should say rather, those for special classes of readers. Works relating to matters of local interest and written in the English language should come first, and then works relating to foreign matters and written in foreign languages. Files of bound magazines will, in a measure, take the place of annuals, but the latter also are desirable. Duplicates of many of the works in the reading room should be placed in the stacks. Many undersized books will be bought for the reference collection, necessarily, but kept as "desk reserves."

All libraries will supplement the book collections in their reference departments by newspaper clippings selected simply with a view to supplying information not otherwise easily accessible. These should

be destroyed as soon as their usefulness is over. They will also supplement the bibliographic information contained in their own catalogs by making accessible in the reference collections the more important subject bibliographies, and the more important library catalogs even if there are already copies of these in other departments of the library. Library catalogs like that of the Boston public library, the Shakespeare collection and the Columbia university list of books on education are especially desirable. They have all the value of bibliographies, and in addition, they show what volumes may be secured in other libraries or borrowed from them.

Altogether our libraries will in the future, I am certain, pursue an increasingly liberal policy regarding their reference collections. They must do so if they are to become generous patrons of learning, or even useful bureaus of information.

A paper was then read by MR WILLIAM C. LANE, of the Harvard university library, on

A CENTRAL BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND LENDING COLLECTION FOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

The subject was presented by the Librarian of Harvard university in an address at Oberlin college, June 23, 1908, on "Co-operation among college libraries." (See the "Library Journal," November 1908, 33: 429-438, and the "Oberlin Alumni Magazine," December 1908, 5:92-110.) Reprints of the "Library Journal" article were in the hands of the members of the Conference of New England librarians which met at Bowdoin college, November 27, 1908. The subject was discussed at this meeting, and was referred to a committee consisting of the librarians of Harvard university, Yale university, Princeton university, Clark university, and Mt Holyoke college.

The Committee met in Cambridge, January 22, 1909, and presents the following statement:

The Committee gladly recognizes the valuable work which has been already

done, or is now in progress, intended to disseminate information in regard to the contents of American libraries (such as Bolton's "Catalogue of scientific and technical periodicals," 1897, the various union lists of periodicals accessible in the library centers, the recent report of a committee of the American historical association on materials for European history in American libraries, the "Notes on special collections in American libraries," published by the Harvard library in 1892, the report on special collections now in progress at the hands of the Bureau of education, and other similar undertakings). It also notes, with satisfaction, the general willingness of libraries to make their treasures widely available by inter-library loans, and it would draw special attention to the service rendered by the Library of Congress in gathering great accumulations of literary material in Washington and in lending freely to other libraries. But it believes that an institution organized specifically for the ends stated (the systematic accumulation and dissemination of information and the lending of books), with the object of unifying and supplementing the work of existing agencies, would, if adequately endowed, perform a highly useful service and would contribute to economy in administration and in the purchase of books. It would fill a place that existing agencies are unable to take.

The proposed institution would be (A) a bureau of information, and (B) a central lending library.

A. As a bureau of information:

1. Object: To collect information in regard to the contents of American libraries and the conditions under which books are or can be lent; to digest this information and to render it easily accessible; to disseminate it so far as practicable in printed form.

To persuade libraries to depend on each other's resources more than at present and to encourage them, so far as practicable, to acquire new material instead of duplicating what already exists elsewhere.

To make the resources of the smaller li-

braries more generally available than they have been hitherto, by directing applications for loans to these libraries whenever such applications would be successful, in this way relieving in some degree the pressure on the larger libraries.

2. Character of the information to be gathered, with respect to each library:

a. Titles of individual important books or sets of books, recorded with precision as to imprint, edition, etc.

b. Notes in regard to the special subjects in which each library is strongest, or for collecting which, it has special funds or special opportunities.

c. Facts in regard to the conditions under which the library is able to lend, and as to what kind of applications are welcome.

3. Sources from which the desired information may be drawn:

a. Printed catalog cards issued by various libraries, e. g., Library of Congress, John Crerar library, Boston public library, Harvard college library, etc. These should be collected and (with some exceptions) digested into one great catalog.

b. Printed library catalogs in book form, e. g., Peabody Institute, Baltimore; Boston Athenæum; Astor library, New York; Carnegie library, Pittsburgh; Surgeon General's library, Washington, and many others.

c. Bulletins and reports of libraries from which abstracts may be made or clippings may be cut and mounted.

d. General published accounts of library resources, union lists, and special bibliographies, which indicate where the books listed may be found.

e. Special reports furnished by libraries on request.

f. Reports and records from agents of the bureau who should make personal visits to the principal libraries. Probably more useful and pertinent information can be collected in this way than by any other means.

4. Form in which the information collected will be preserved:

a. A consolidated card catalog arranged by authors.

b. Special reports filed on standard sheets or in folders of the same size and arranged by subject.

c. Printed catalogs and special lists.

5. Equipment, building, etc.:

A simple, well-lighted, low building, with the best modern office appliances, including catalog and file cases on the unit system, capable of being indefinitely expanded.

6. Staff and cost of maintenance:

A director, salary \$2,000 to \$3,000; two assistants (competent bibliographers) and two or three others for clerical work, typewriting, filing cards, mounting and arranging papers, etc. It is impossible to tell, before the work is more definitely organized, just how much would be required. For the preliminary and preparatory work, extra assistance could doubtless be used to advantage. Later, one or more of the more capable assistants could be employed as special agents to visit libraries.

For salaries, say.....\$8,000

For printing 1,500

For running expenses (heat, light,
etc.) 2,500

\$12,000

Much unnecessary expense will be saved if the bureau be established in close connection with some large library. More efficient service will likewise be given.

B. As a central lending library:

1. Need. The smaller college libraries, with a limited amount of money to spend for books, cannot possibly buy many of the more important works—society transactions, collections of documents and sources, single expensive publications, etc.—which are sure to be essential to scholarly investigations. It would be poor economy to buy them all, if they could, since these works are likely to be wanted but seldom even in the largest libraries. The present system of inter-library loans often breaks down because the library from which a loan is asked either has not the book asked for or cannot lend without injury to the rights of readers on the spot. The first difficulty can never be entirely overcome, but a central library might wisely do something toward acquiring sets not

to be found elsewhere. The second difficulty might be frequently avoided by means of a central lending collection built up on a well considered plan based on the experience of the larger libraries.

2. Scope. What should the library attempt to collect?

a. In general, books referred to frequently and individually by bibliographies and by current guides to the literature of special subjects.

b. In particular, periodicals and society publications; facsimiles of manuscripts and of early printed books; large sets—collected works, collections of documents, editions of mediæval and other early writers; first editions of literary works, especially such as are of value in establishing a correct text; expensive volumes; *not* collections of books and pamphlets which can only be used to advantage *en masse*.

It should be noticed that most of the classes of books recommended are such as can be ordered, cataloged, shelved, and administered at a minimum expense as compared with the value of the books.

3. Sources from which books may be obtained:

a. By purchase, altogether the best and most reliable source. From \$5,000 a year up could be spent to advantage.

b. By gifts from societies and governments.

c. By gifts from libraries or individuals. Advantage should be taken of this source so far as possible, and some libraries may be content to turn over valuable, but bulky, sets to the central library in order to be relieved of them, but great care should be taken not to allow the shelves to become cumbered in this way with useless accumulations.

A central depository maintained by co-operation for the storage of little used books is a different and distinct scheme which a group of neighboring libraries may some time find it for their interest to adopt, and it is conceivable that it might be combined with the scheme now under discussion, but it demands separate, careful discussion and should not be allowed to become a part of the present plan unadvisedly.

4. Staff. No large addition to the staff of the bureau of information would be required, unless purchase on a very large scale were attempted. One competent cataloger, with one assistant for the more mechanical and clerical parts of the work, with additional service of janitor grade for shipping, etc., might perhaps suffice.

5. Buildings. A simple building on compact storage plan, built on the unit system and capable of ultimate great expansion, with facilities for receiving and shipping books. It should be well lighted, but need not be elaborately heated, being intended solely for storage and not for study.

6. Endowment and income. A substantial sum, say \$50,000, would be desirable for initial purchases, with an annual income of say \$10,000 for bookbuying. Additional service, \$2,000, and other expenses, \$1,000, would be a conservative estimate. Combining these figures with those given under A 6 above, we get for the annual cost of the whole institution:

Books	\$10,000
Salaries	10,000
Printing	1,500
Running expenses	3,500

\$25,000

C. Source of support:

1. By subscriptions from co-operating libraries. We see no reason to think that any adequate support could be obtained by this means. A system of fees to be collected of borrowers would also be ineffectual.

2. Adoption by some existing institution as a recognized department of its work. There would be a marked economy in this form of organization, but we know of no institution that has the means to devote to the work. It is possible that an endowment could more easily be secured if the bureau and library were to be established on this basis. All considerations, however, point to this source of support as the only practicable one, namely,

3. Endowment. An invested fund in the hands of trustees or committed to the

care of some educational institution seems to be the only secure basis for the activities outlined above.

D. Form of organization:

1. As a special department of some existing university or reference library, with a distinct endowment, but conducted by the library as an extension of work already begun. The work undertaken would gain in effectiveness by having the resources of the larger library close at hand and under the same control; the library with which it was connected would profit by having more convenient use of the records and collections of the lending bureau.

2. As a separate institution governed by a committee of librarians and professors representing different colleges and different departments of study, and administered by a director appointed by the committee. It should, if possible, in order to secure some of the advantages mentioned above, be affiliated with a large library. The cordial co-operation and moral support of many colleges might perhaps be better secured in this way than by the form suggested under 1.

3. As a department of the Library of Congress.

4. As a bureau of the Smithsonian Institution, since the express object of this Institution is the "increase and diffusion of knowledge among men."

5. As a function of the headquarters office of the American Library Association.

In the opinion of the Committee, either the first or second form of organization seems, on the whole, to promise the greatest security and efficiency.

An expression of opinion in regard to the various points noted above is desired by the Committee that they may be enabled, if the plan meets with general approval, to outline its scope wisely and to make an effective statement of its advantages.

MR HASTINGS: I should like to ask about the publication of the Bureau of education referred to by Mr Lane.

MR JOHNSTON: The publication of the Bulletin giving a report on special col-

lections has been unavoidably delayed. Much more information has yet to be collected from libraries and institutions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Reference has been made to the union catalog of printed cards issued by various libraries, which is being filed in the Library of Congress. Will Mr Hastings tell us when this will be finished?

MR HASTINGS: We hope it will be completed by December, so we shall have a union card catalog in one alphabet of the Boston public, John Crerar, Harvard university and New York public libraries.

MR LANE: Is there any possibility of giving that still wider scope?

MR HASTINGS: Not without manuscript copying—except Pittsburgh.

MR RICHARDSON: Would the Library of Congress welcome typewritten cards?

MR HASTINGS: Yes.

MR HANSON: It should be said that the union catalog also includes the departmental libraries. With regard to Mr Lane's outlined plan, the most difficult part would be to make the large collection of books. The bureau of information could be more easily operated. I spent a day in the office of the Gesamtkatalog in Berlin. There the union catalog of German university libraries is finished to F or G, and with three or four assistants good work was done. In many libraries which I visited I heard the work of the Gesamtkatalog mentioned as a great help to them.

MR KOOPMAN: Would the Library of Congress be prepared to do any such bureau of information work in connection with the union catalog?

THE CHAIRMAN: While not prepared to commit the Librarian of Congress to any line of action, I may say that such requests as come in now are always answered if possible, and when a book is

asked for which we do not have, we try if possible to say in our answer where it may be found.

MR RANCK: What proportion of the books represented by these cards are found in one library only?

MR JOHNSTON: In developing the catalog in the Bureau of education, we found a considerable number of duplicates, 33% of which, for instance, could be found in the Library of Congress, and 22% in the John Crerar library.

MR AUSTEN: Is it the plan to indicate on these cards all the libraries containing the books?

MR HASTINGS: Yes, we file all the cards, one copy for each library.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will call for a report from the Committee on nominations.

MR AUSTEN, for the Committee, made the following nominations: For Chairman, Mr W. Dawson Johnston; for Secretary, Miss Beatrice Winsor. They were unanimously elected.

MR LANE: In behalf of my Committee I want to say that we should be glad to have it enlarged by the addition of members from this body in order that it may be more representative.

MR RICHARDSON offered the following resolution:

Resolved, that the College and Reference section recommend to the American Library Association that the Committee, appointed by the New England association of college librarians to consider and report on the question of establishing a central bureau of information and a lending library for colleges and universities, be made a Committee of the American Library Association.

The resolution was adopted.

Adjourned.

TRUSTEES' SECTION

A meeting of the Trustees' Section was held at Bretton Woods, July 1, 2:30 p. m., Mr W. T. Porter, of Cincinnati, in the chair. In the absence of the Secretary,

Frank E. Woodward was chosen secretary pro tem.

The following were present: Messrs. W. T. Porter, Cincinnati; David A. Boody,